The Suicide Information Database Wales/Cymru

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The Challenge:
Every year approximately 800,000 people die by suicide worldwide, 1–2 in every 100 deaths. Prevention of suicide is a global public health challenge. Suicide is a tragedy and causes distress for family, friends, professionals and the wider community. Although the factors that contribute to a suicide are many and complex, suicide is potentially preventable.

The Research:
Prevention of suicide is a challenge that extends beyond mental health services. Linking health and social care system data records for the same individual across different services and over time has enormous potential in suicide research.

The Suicide Information Database-Wales or SID-Cymru, led by Dr Ann John, Farr Institute, Swansea University, is a population based resource for studying factors associated with suicide deaths.

The SID-Cymru database holds information on prior health, nature of previous contacts with services and wider social circumstances of all those who complete suicide (known and unknown to mental health services) within the population of Wales via Swansea University’s Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) Databank. The SAIL Databank contains vast amounts of anonymous data collected on a daily basis by health and social care systems to support people’s care.

The Results
SID Cymru offers the opportunity to investigate the risk factors and trends for suicide, including: primary care diagnosis of depression; levels of treatment with antidepressants and trends in such treatment over time; rural and urban geography; educational attainment; levels of physical illness.

The study also enables investigations into the settings and pathways of care where people are in contact with services in the year leading up to their suicide across the whole population and in specific groups such as the elderly.

The Impact:
SID Cymru is an important resource in facilitating research on suicide. The study has looked for opportunities for prevention and made recommendations to reduce the risk of suicide for the people of Wales and internationally, recommendations to date have included:

- Data from SID-Cymru has informed ‘Talk to Me 2’, the latest suicide prevention strategy for Wales, launched in June 2015. There is a particular focus on opportunities for prevention in primary care and emergency departments.
- Data from SID-Cymru informed the ‘Thematic review of deaths of children and young people through probable suicide, 2006-2012’. The review made a number of recommendations to various agencies, including Welsh Government, such as minimum pricing for alcohol.
- The team at Swansea University worked with the Samaritans on the adoption of the Samaritans ‘Media reporting guidelines for suicide’ in Wales.
- Dr John, Professor Gunnell (Bristol University) and the Samaritans met with Welsh media editors and journalists in 2012 to discuss and promote sensible media reporting of suicide.
- Dr John and Professor Dennis presented recommendations from the media reporting work to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Suicide Prevention in 2014.

For more information visit: [http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/4/11/e006780.full](http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/4/11/e006780.full)

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